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A

FORM of PRAYER
FOR

Married Persons.

For the most part taken out of the Li-
turgy of our Church.

And out of the Form of Solemnization of
Matrimony.

To be devoutly used by them in
Private, once a Day.

1 Pet. 3. 7.

*Likewise ye Husbands dwell with them
according to knowledge, giving Ho-
nour unto the Wife as unto the weaker
Vessel, and as being Heirs together of
the grace of life, that your Prayers be
not hindred.*

EXETER, Printed by S. Darker, for Charles
Teo, and John Pearce. 1698.

JOHN C. AYER

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Preface.

THere is nothing conduceth more to the comfort and satisfaction of a Married State than for Man and Wife to live together in the fear of God : This is an excellent Preservative against Strife and Discord, against confusion and every evil work ; as also a mighty Incentive to Love and Peace, and to every good word and work. And the best way to maintain a lively and vigorous sense of this divine grace in their hearts, is for them to be constant in the devout use of morning and evening prayer in their Family and Closet ; and once a day to retire from the World, and pray by themselves, that they may be *Heirs together*

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ther of the Grace of Life. To this purpose I have publish'd the ensuing Form, which is our Church's Labour, and not mine; having no other hand in it my self but what she has ordained to be said on the Wedding-day, for imploring a blessing on the Married Couple, I have applied to all the days of their Life afterwards; and if they are careful and conscientious to put it in practice as they ought, they take the only course to revive and spiritualize their Nuptial Joys, and to make themselves ready for the Marriage of the Lamb. I am sensible in this last Age of declining Piety I shall meet with some that will oppose, and (if possible) hinder the Accomplishment of this Charitable Design, by buzzing people in the Ears with *who has required this at our hands?* 'Tis enough for us to pray twice a day with our Families; and to pray once more with our Wives apart from them, is more than God requires, or Man can well perform; and therefore this is a Work of Supererrogation that may be well forborn: You may as well enjoyn King and People, Ministers and their Parishioners, as Man and Wife to pray together once a day.

But in answer to such Objectors I say:

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1: If this be not a commanded, 'tis a commendable practice ; and has those general Precepts of praying always, and praying every where, to warrant it ; besides that particular one, *Mat. 18. 19. If two of you shall agree on Earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven :* Which by reason of the Dual Number seems principally to respect the Conjugal Pair, and is an encouraging promise to their joynt Petitions.

2. That pious Kings and their People (some of them at least who represent the rest) do pray together twice a day ; and so should the Ministers of the Lord and their respective Congregations ; I am sure the

Church of *England* † appoints it ; and such Publick Prayers ought not to be omitted without just and reasonable cause ; on which account the Church is called the House of Prayer ; and every Minister should be able to say as our Lord Jesus did, *Mark 14. 49.*

† *And the Curate that ministreth in every Parish-Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hin-*

dred, shall say the same ; i. e. Morning and Evening Prayer, in the Parish-Church or Chapel where he ministreth, &c. Pref. to the Com. Prayer-book.

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I was daily with you in the Temple: And if they be so, some of their people no doubt will resort thither to joyn with them in their Publick Devotion.

3. Married Persons can find time to eat and drink, and it may be to smœak together; and for other innocent and lawful Pleasures; and why can they not as well find time to pray together, which is a more necessary and beneficial Diversion? Certainly they may, and all such as are really devout, will find or make leisure for it. Indeed I do not expect that those who are Enemies to all Forms of Prayer (not excepting that of our Lord's own composing) shou'd be in love with this, or make use of it; though I presume the best and wisest of them cannot devise a better; yet I hope and beg that all the Sons and Daughters of our Church (who are entered into holy Wedlock) wou'd not slight what is here intended for their real good; but be so kind to themselves, and just to their Profession, as every day to repeat these few pithy Collects; and I dare engage thro' the grace of God co-operating therewith, it will be a means to lighten the heavy Cares and Troubles incident to their Condition; and to sanctify and sweeten the most severe Providential dispensations that can befall them;

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them: I am certain there was never more need of such Prayers than at this time, when all Ranks and Orders of Men, and particularly Husbands and Wives, fail so much in their Duty towards one another; and there can be no general Reformation throughout this sinful Kingdom (which loudly calls for it) unless it begins in Families; and no Reformation can be wrought there, except it begin with the Heads thereof; for whose sake this Form is made publick by it self in an entire Office; there being none of this kind extant that I have met with in all our books of Devotion; and consequently very few I doubt that accustom themselves to it; tho Man and Wife ought frequently to joyn in Prayer exclusive of all other; or else they are not fit Emblems of our Lord Jesus and his Spouse the Church, who daily joyn together in Supplications, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks to their Heavenly Father.

I shall say no more to recommend this Manual of Devotion, but earnestly beseech Almighty God, that his blessing may go along with it, and in mercy to hear and answer all such well-disposed Christians as daily and sincerely make use of it. *Amen.*

The

The General Confession.

Almighty and most merciful Father,
 we have erred and strayed from
 thy ways like lost Sheep; we have fol-
 lowed too much the devices and desires
 of our own hearts; we have offended a-
 gainst thy holy Laws; we have left un-
 done those things which we ought to
 have done; and we * have
 done those things which we
 ought not to have done;
 and there is no health in
 us; but thou, O Lord, have
 mercy upon us, miserable
 offenders. Spare thou them,
 O God, which confess their
 Faults; restore thou them that are pe-
 nitent, according to thy promises decla-
 red unto mankind, in Christ Jesu our
 Lord; and grant, O most merciful Fa-
 ther, for his sake, that we may hereafter
 live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to
 the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

** Here if both
 have openly
 fail'd in their
 duty, whether
 in word or
 deed, let them
 particularly
 confess it.*

The

*The Collect for the 24th Sunday after
Trininity.*

O Lord we beseech thee absolve us from our offences, that thro' thy bountiful goodness, we may both be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed; grant this O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Husband.

Husband. O Lord save the King.

Wife. And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

H. Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

W. And make thy chosen People joyful.

H. O Lord save us thy servants.

W. Who put our trust in thee.

H. O Lord send us help from thy holy place.

W. And evermore mightily defend us.

H. Be unto us a Tower of strength.

W. From the face of our enemy.

H. Give *peace in our time*, O Lord.

W. Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

H. O God make clean our hearts within us.

W. And take not thy holy spirit from us.

The

The second Collect for Peace.

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good councils, and all just works do proceed, give unto thy servants that peace which the World cannot give, that both our Hearts may be set to obey thy Commandments; and also, that by thee, we being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

The third Collect for Grace.

Q Lord our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this * day, defend us in the same with thy mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings may be ordered by thy

** This Collect
to be used in the
Morning only, and
then the next fol-
lowing omitted.*

governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Evening Collect for safety.

Lighten our darknels we beseech thee

** This Collect
to be used in the
Evening only, &
the former then
omitted.*

O Lord, and by thy great mercy, defend us from all perils and dangers of this * night, for the love of thine only Son our Saviour, Jesus

Christ. Amen.

*These six following Prayers are taken out
of the Form for solemnizing Matrimony.*

I.

O God of *Abraham*, God of *Isaac*, God of *Jacob*, bless us thy servants, and sow the seed of eternal life in our hearts; that whatsoever in thy holy Word we shall profitably learn, we may

may indeed fulfil the same: look, Q Lord, mercifully upon us from heaven, and bless us; and as thou didst send thy blessing upon *Abraham* and *Sarah* to their great comfort, so vouchsafe to send thy blessing upon us thy servants, that we obeying thy will, and being in safety under thy protection, may abide in thy love unto our lives end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

Q merciful Lord and heavenly Father, by whose gracious gift mankind is increased, we beseech thee assist us with thy blessing, that (if it be thy good pleasure) we may both be fruitful in † the procreation of Children, and also live together so long in godly love and honesty, that we may see our Children christianly and vertuously brought up, to thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

† *This Prayer to be omitted, if the Woman be past Child-bearing.*

O Mer

O Merciful Lord, and heavenly Father, by whose gracious gift mankind is increased, we beseech thee make us joy-

† *If the Woman be with child the former Prayer to be omitted, and aliered thus.*

* *If the Woman has had a child before, instead of (a) say (another.)*

ful parents in the timely
† birth of (a *) gracious child, of which thou hast in mercy given us good hopes, and grant also, that we may live so long together in godly love and honesty, as to see our children christianly and vertuously brought up, to thy praise and honour, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

III.

O God, who hast consecrated the state of Matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual Marriage and Unity betwixt Christ and his Church, look
mer-

mercifully upon us thy servants, that we may love each other according to thy Word, and above all other Persons in the World; that our thoughts may not stray from each other, nor covet after any other Person; but that we may be heirs of the same grace, and at last partakers of the same glory; O Lord bless us both, and grant us to inherit thine everlasting Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

IV.

Almighty God, who at the beginning didst create our first Parents *Adam* and *Eve*, and didst sanctifie and join them together in Marriage; pour upon us the Riches of thy grace, sanctifie and bless us, that we may please thee both in Body and Soul, and live together in holy love, unto our lives end, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

V.

O Eternal God, creator and preserver of all mankind, giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting Life; send thy blessing upon us thy servants, that we may surely perform and keep the marriage Vow and Covenant betwixt us made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy Laws, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

VI.

O God the Father, O God the Son, O God the Holy Ghost, bless preserve and keep us, O Lord, mercifully with thy favour look upon us, and so fill us with all spiritual benediction and grace, that we may so live together in this Life, that in the World to come we may have Life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord, to make our common supplications unto thee, and dost promise, that when *two* or *three* are gathered together in thy name thou wilt grant their requests; fulfil now O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them, granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us both and our Family, now and evermore.

Amen

B

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The Five following Collects may be any of them added to the daily office, as occasion shall require.

The Collect on St. Stephen's day to be used in perillous times.

I.

Grant, O Lord, that in all our Sufferings here upon Earth, for the testimony of thy Truth, we may stedfastly look up to Heaven, and by Faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our Persecutors, by the Example of thy first Martyr *St. Stephen*, who prayed for his Murderers to Thee. O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those who suffer for Thee our only Mediator and Advocate.

Amen.

II.

II.

A Prayer for a sick Child.

Remember not Lord our offences,
nor the offences of our Forefathers ; nei-
ther take thou vengeance of our sins, in
visiting them upon our

poor Child, and punish-

ing || (*him*) for our ini-
quities ; but in the
midst of thy judgments

|| *If it be a Fe-
male use (her) for
(him), and (she)
for (he).*

which we have deserv'd, do thou re-
member mercy ; spare us, good Lord,
spare our poor Child, whom thou hast
redeemed with thy most precious blood,
that (*he*) may recover his health and
strength before (*he*) goes hence, and be
no more seen in this world : grant this,
O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's
sake, thine only Son, our Lord.

Amen.

III.

*Another out of the Visitation Office for
a sick Child.*

O Almighty God, and merciful Father, to whom belong the issues of life and death, look down from Heaven we humbly beseech thee, with the Eyes of

*This Prayer may
be also used for a
sick servant, putting
him in the
room of [dear
Child.]*

mercy upon our [dear Child] now lying upon a bed of sickness; visit him, O Lord with thy salvation, deliver him in thy good appointed time from all his bodily pain and sickness, and bless the means we use for the *recovery of his bodily health*, and save his Soul for *thy mercies sake*, that if it shall be *thy pleasure* to prolong his *days* here on earth, he may live to thee, and be an instrument of *thy glory*, by serving thee *faithfully*, and doing good in his generation; or else receive him into those heavenly habitations,

ons, where the souls of those that sleep in the Lord Jesus, injoy perpetual Peace and Felicity : grant this, O Lord, for thy mercies sake, in the same thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

Amen.

IV.

A Prayer to be used presently after a Child's Death.

O Almighty God, who hast of thy great goodness taken unto thy self the Soul of our dear Child, now departed, we beseech thee give us grace patiently to submit to thine afflicting hand, and sanctifie this sad Providence unto us; and teach us, who survive in this and other like daily spectacles of *Mortality*, to see how frail and uncertain our condition is, and so to number our *days*, that we may *seriously apply our hearts to holy and heavenly wisdom*, whilst we live
here,

here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through the *Merits* of Jesus Christ thine *only Son*, our Lord.

Amen.

V.

A Prayer to be used by married persons when either party is sick.

O God, who art perfect love, create in us such loving Natures, and sympathizing Dispositions, that we may rejoice with each other in our Comforts, and mourn with each other in our Troubles; and if it be *thy* blessed will, grant that for *thy*

|| *Leave out* glory, and each o-
[Children] if thers, and our ||
they have none. [Childrens] good, we

may live a little longer together in godly Love and Honesty: but however thou art pleased to deal with us, give us, O Lord, an unafflicting Foresight of our parting here on Earth,

(23)

Earth, and at last an *happy* meeting in the Kingdom of Heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

F I N I S.
